

LOXTON



BOOMERANG CLUB NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

SPRING WINE CLUB RELEASE

WINEMAKER'S SELECTION

2015 PINOT NOIR, GRIFFIN'S LAIR (SONOMA COAST)

2015 GSP, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2014 ZINFANDEL, ROSSI RANCH (SONOMA VALLEY)

2015 SYRAH (SONOMA VALLEY)

2014 SYRAH, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2014 CABERNET SHIRAZ, GRANDFATHER'S CUVÉE (SONOMA VALLEY)

OPTIONS FOR CUSTOM ORDERS

2017 SENCILLO (SONOMA COUNTY)

2017 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH (SONOMA COUNTY)

SONOMA REDS - LOT 11 (SONOMA COUNTY)

2011 SYRAH, ROSSI RANCH, LIBRARY RELEASE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2014 PORT (SONOMA VALLEY)



Planting the Dunbar Daffodils. The local community has planted 40,000 daffodils along Dunbar road as part of our community recovery.

Spring 2018

Dear Club Member,

Much like our Sonoma community, the land has an incredible ability to heal itself when given the chance. As I write this Spring 2018 Newsletter, I can see that rains have made the hills a brilliant green, erasing all but the most stubborn blackened areas that were devastated by the fires. The Dunbar Daffodil Project, where the local community banded together to plant 40,000 bulbs along our road, are starting to show and we will have a fabulous display of flowers for people to see this Spring and in subsequent years. It was wonderful to participate and at one stage I had about 4,000 bulbs in my garage! We were very lucky to come through the experience almost unscathed although three vineyards I work with were badly effected by heat and/or fire and suffered lost fruit and vines. Our thoughts are still with those who lost houses and property.

I am reminded that being a steward of the land is just as important as making the best wine and I believe that the two are connected. In that spirit, I'm excited by two new developments for 2018. The first is to get certification for this stewardship and I'm working with Fish Friendly farming and Sonoma Landsmart for this purpose. The second is that Loxton Cellars is the first winery in the US to get a machine that grinds empty tasting room bottles back into sand that we can use to improve our clay soils. The prospect of all those bottles not being recycled properly and some ending up in a landfill and has been weighing on my conscience for some time and I've decided to do something about it. We will be updating these developments via social media and website.

Its harvest time in Australia and I'll be off to see some of it. Dad sold the vineyard late last year, but has been asked to help with crop estimates and grape sampling so his 65+ year's experience with the property isn't going to waste! I anticipate some odd feelings seeing it for the first time when not in family hands but I like the new owner and am happy to hear that he has even improved things since the purchase.

I've been delighted to see that despite a very challenging growing season and harvest in 2017, the wines seem to be developing very well. We had to change our farming plans to react to the wettest winter on record, then deal with incredible heat in late August and early September as harvest began, but our efforts have paid off as you will notice with our first 2017 releases of Rosé and Sencillo. 98% of my grapes had been harvested when we lost power for 2 weeks due to the fires and I was able to continue all the winemaking processes that we normally do by hand. Consequently the red wines were not compromised and the Chardonnay had finished its fermentation in barrel before the power outage thus continuing a string of particularly good wines coming from the Hawk Hill.

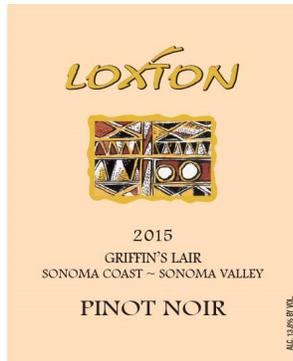
The standard Spring releases are a very strong line-up of wines. The two Syrah wines reflect the improvements we continue to make here with Estate fruit and the new Estate GSP is a lovely follow up to last year's version, although a little more classically structured and elegant. The Zinfandel is so typical of this region with bright fruit and structure and will be a great wine for Summer and the grilling season. Lastly, the Cabernet Shiraz displays lots of fruit and intensity and should be a great addition to the cellar. As shipping costs have continued to rise, I'd decided to help out with case purchases and you will note that shipping costs have decreased significantly while 6 bottle shipping has been kept the same as last year.

Cheers,



Chris Loxton

2015 PINOT NOIR - GRIFFIN'S LAIR



Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Blend: 100% Pinot Noir

pH: 3.71

Alcohol: 13.8%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 169 cases

Bottled unfinned & lightly filtered August 30, 2016

Release Price: \$35.00

Its hard to believe I started making Pinot noir over 10 years ago and I initially waded in as I liked the newer California Pinots. It is regarded as being the most difficult grape to work with and I thought the challenge might make me a better winemaker, thus helping my other wines. The interesting thing is that I haven't really needed to change the way I make wine very much; the relatively non-interventionist approach I take to other wines seems to work just fine with Pinot. Perhaps the biggest challenge was getting to know the fruit and making the right stylistic choice of how to bring out the best character of the vineyard. When I worked with Russian River Valley fruit from the Archer vineyard I picked a little riper to bring out the cherry cola notes that we find so often in Russian River. I pick a little earlier with Griffin's Lair, as it makes a more delicate pinot. I've also learned to use barrels with less oak toasting as the fruit seems to have a little of a smoky note anyway and it can become too much. This is a slow learning curve as there is only one harvest each year and each year has different weather conditions that effect the grapes.

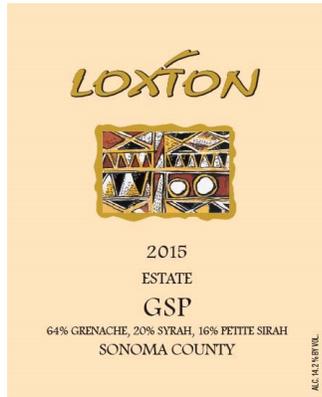
The common theme through the 10 years, no matter the vineyard, has been that Pinot requires doing as little as possible because it lacks color and tannin that are natural anti-oxidants. I make the wine in a typical red wine manner by fermenting with the skins, but then treat it like a white wine, being very protective against oxidation.

2015 was a fairly straightforward harvest. Continued drought meant very low yields and less wine, but excellent concentration. Two different clones (Pommard and 115) were picked together and blended; the Pommard giving color and richness and the 115 giving aromatics. Holding the wine back for an extra 6 months bottle age past the normal Fall release has seen a sweet cherry fruit note develop to go with typical Pinot forest floor, tobacco leaf and just a hint of smokiness. It should provide lovely drinking with lighter meals now and for the next 5 years.



We gently push the wine out of barrel with nitrogen gas rather than use pumps which can introduce more oxidation.

2015 GSP - ESTATE



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 64% Grenache, 20% Syrah,
16% Petite Sirah

pH: 3.61

Alcohol: 14.2%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 206 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered March 27, 2017

Release Price: \$30.00

I wonder what my grandfather would think of me growing Grenache? He grew Grenache (but pronounced "gran-ash") mostly for making Ports as it can be picked at high sugars while retaining good acidity to balance Port's sweetness, without becoming a raisin. In his day, quantity was the name of the game and Grenache had an inferior reputation, much like it did here in California. We have now learned that crop yields must be kept down to improve the wine intensity and these same qualities that made it useful for port wines are valuable for table wines. Today we are seeing a revival of Grenache in California and internationally, with plantings increasing in the best wine regions. I'm proud to be a part of that revival, but also proud to take my families earlier efforts into the ultra-premium table wine arena.

We grafted Grenache onto some of our Syrah vines in 2013 on the driest and poorest soils on the Estate to curb the inherit vigor of Grenache. We now see vines that are big enough to have sufficient leaves to ripen fruit, but which then stop growing so that the vine directs energy into the berries. We still remove some green fruit to concentrate that energy into fewer bunches to give the wine more intensity.

As done in previous vintages, the individual wines are made and kept separate for the first 6 months and then blended to a 500 gallon oak Foudre for aging another full year before bottling. I'm liking using this Foudre more and more as it keeps the fresh cherry fruit of Grenache better than a barrel, while still allowing the tannin structure of the Petite sirah component to soften.

This 2015 is only the second release from these grafted vines and comes on the heels of the wildly successful 2014 version. It shows that Grenache fruit, then the roundness of Syrah with structure from Petite. A little more elegant than the '14, I particularly like it for its versatility with food and think it will be at its best in another year and then hold for another 3-4 years after that.



Balanced vines have just enough shoot length and leaves to ripen the fruit

2014 ZINFANDEL - ROSSI RANCH



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 100% Zinfandel

pH: 3.83

Alcohol: 14.5%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 114 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered August 30, 2015

Release Price: \$30.00

Some of you that know me would not be surprised to hear that I keep tasting notes on the wines that I try. Perhaps it's a legacy of my scientific training and I love to look back on notes of the same wine taken over several years to see how they (or I) have changed. In re-reading my notes from a respected Northern Rhone Syrah I had written "great typicity of grape and region" and I'd given the wine 4 stars out of 5. This got me thinking how much I value a wine that represents what it is and where it comes from. I want all my wines to do this and I can think of no better example than my wines from the Rossi ranch here in Glen Ellen.

Val Rossi's family planted a (mostly) Zinfandel vineyard in 1910 in a small valley within Sonoma Valley. The area is quite distinct and its unique microclimate and soil give wines with great color, tannin and intensity and they stand out because of this. A consequence is bigger wines that take longer in barrel and bottle to settle down to where they can be released. We are now finally releasing the '14 Zinfandel and the '14 Syrah will be in the Fall '18 shipment. It might not make the bank happy, but its about making the best wine, not about making money, ...right?

My first Rossi Zinfandels were from the section of the vineyard called Schumacher's Hill, but this area was replanted in 2014 so for this wine and I took grapes from a block a few hundred yards away with very similar soils called "Heritage 7". The wine has stayed firmly in the same mold and shows the imprint of the vineyard in its deep color, tannic backbone and bright red fruits so typical of Zinfandel. This is a wine to have over the Summer with something grilled. It is rich and dense with tons of cherry and red fruits that will match up with the bright flavors of grilled meats and vegetables. Lots of heat leading up to the harvest meant lower acid than normal and this makes the wine easy to enjoy before dinner as well as with dinner. It is a wine to enjoy now and for the next 3 years or so.



Inspecting the replants on Schumacher's Hill. The '14 Zinfandel now comes from vines in the upper left.

2015 SYRAH - SONOMA VALLEY



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 92% Syrah (83% Estate, 6% Rossi ranch, 3% Griffin's Lair), 8% Petite sirah (Estate)

pH: 3.66

Alcohol: 14.2%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 172 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered July 10, 2017

Release Price: \$25.00

It's no real secret that I love wines made from Syrah/Shiraz and I often say that when I go to a restaurant I order the wine and then look at the menu. When it's a Syrah I can order just about anything on the menu as I find it so food friendly. There are times though, when I'm not looking for that bigger wine but something that is a bit lighter and more elegant; perhaps the Rhone's St. Joseph in style rather than a big California Syrah or Aussie Shiraz. With that in mind I began thinking about making a style that has more elegance and finesse and not just raw power. The opportunity came with 4 rows of Syrah that were planted here on the estate with a French clone (174) that I began working with in 2013.

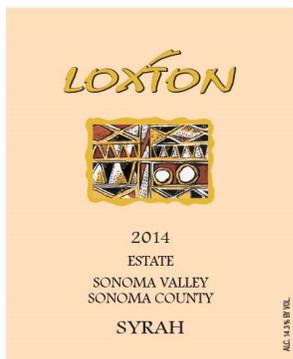
When grapes are grown in the same place over many centuries, small mutations arise and when these vines are propagated this is what we call a "clone". To give the wines complexity we have a number of Syrah clones on the Estate; "174", "470", some "877" and a selection from the Alban vineyard. I always pick and ferment them separately and this gives me the option of blending later or keeping something separate. With the 174 clone grown on the east side of the property I've found that it can be picked a little earlier than others without sacrificing any flavor and this gives a wine with a little more lightness and freshness.

For this Sonoma Valley Syrah I've started with the Estate clone 174, then added a little of the '15 Estate Syrah that will be released next year, then small amounts of Syrah from Rossi Ranch and Griffin's Lair. The addition of a some estate Petite sirah gave the final wine the structure that I wanted. It is the first 2015 Syrah to be released and it captures what I was trying to do. It shows the floral nature of these more elegant wines with lots of red fruit and then a wonderful middle palate sweetness and graceful tannins. While full flavored, its medium body compared to the bigger Estate and Rossi Ranch Syrah wines will make it easier to pair with food. I really like the wine and because of its lovely balance I think it will improve in the cellar for another 5 years or so.



New signs help us keep track of what we have on the vineyard.

2014 SYRAH - ESTATE



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 100% Syrah

pH: 3.54

Alcohol: 14.3%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 283 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered July 10, 2016

Release Price: \$35.00

Although nature has an incredible ability to heal itself, it does even better when it is given a helping hand. I'm spending more and more time thinking of my farming practices and how to react to current conditions than I did in the past. 2014 was a drought year and we tilled every other row in the vineyard to remove weeds that were competing with the vine for the scarce water resources. This also cuts some of the surface roots which forces the vine to dig deeper into the soil, making it look for water and nutrients. A side benefit is that more nutrients in the juice results in better fermentations and I've noticed more fruitiness and less "off aromas" in fermentations that are the tell tale signs of stressed yeast. Tilling the soils also gives us the opportunity to amend the soil by adding back organically composted grape skins to replace the soil nutrients lost when we harvest the grapes. Although this all sounds like a good idea, in 2017 with the wettest winter in 100 years I was back to no-till, using the grass cover to help dry out the soil. Its all about trying to achieve vine balance between leaf and fruit production.

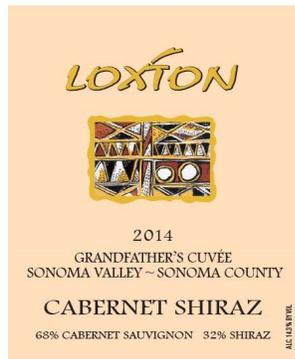
Another benefit of tilling the soil (so long as we avoid erosion) is that we can try to amend it, as any good home gardener knows. We have a section of the vineyard with cracking clay soils and in this area we are trying to add organic matter and also looking at how we can improve drainage. This year we will experiment with adding the "sand" we will make by crushing our empty tasting room bottles to see if it can help soil structure. Its home gardening on a commercial scale!

The '14 is our 3rd Estate Syrah, all coming from drought years, and I think it is fascinating to see how the wines are evolving. Its hard to say if it is changing vineyard practices, or just the different weather, but I think this '14 Estate shows more fruit and balance than the previous wines at the same stage. It has the customary tannin structure but this is mostly hidden behind lots of red fruit to make for a very seamless wine. Enjoy this wine with hearty meals and special dinners and with careful cellaring it should also be showing well for another 10 years. Last year I really enjoyed the '03 and '04 versions (then called EnglandCrest Vineyard) and I think these wines will age equally well.



Getting last year's growth out of the vineyard for shredding and composting

2014 CABERNET SHIRAZ - GRANDFATHER'S CUVÉE



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Shiraz

pH: 3.60

Alcohol: 14.3%

Closure: Cork Finish

Production: 221 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered July 10, 2016

Release Price: \$35.00

The concept of a Cabernet Shiraz blend just seems to make sense. Of course, everything in hindsight seems to make sense and its not like I've come up with the blend by myself. My grandfather's grapes went into a Cabernet Shiraz blend back in the mid '70's so I've known about it for a while! Cabernet can be lean and Syrah can be rounder and softer, so putting the two wines together seems reasonable. What makes it all work though is some Synergy. We could have blended in Pinot noir which is rounder and softer as well, but adding that Syrah just seems to make the wine pop. It might be fun to speculate why this is (perhaps the herbal nature of Cabernet requires the cherry fruit of Syrah and/or Merlot), but the bottom line is that it doesn't really matter. Australia has shown that it works well there and has for many years, and I've got excellent examples of my wines going back to the original 2005 to show that it works well here.

The basis for the blend is the McGraw vineyard Cabernet sauvignon and some of this was bottled separately and was included in last Fall's shipment. I have a number of Syrah wines to blend with but I usually use the Syrah grown here on the Estate. The vineyards are close by and when I walk this vineyard I can see the cabernet vines, and that just seems to be the right starting point. For the 2014 I've used 32% Syrah which sounds an unusual number, but what I do is put a preliminary blend together after 15 months in barrel and then return it to barrel for additional aging. Just prior to bottling I do another blending trial, making very small adjustments to make the best wine I can.

By their very nature (tannins, oak and acid), these are wines that improve in the bottle. This wine is one of my favorite Cabernet Shiraz wines so far made and is fresh and harmonious and shows Cabernet's lovely cassis and mulberry fruit notes but with a sweetness and richness from the Syrah. The fruit masks the obvious tannins and the oak seems to have been swallowed up, making just a small appearance on the finish. Although we have used almost 30% new oak barrels in the aging of the wine, they seem to have lifted up the wine and added sweetness without the oak flavor masking the fruit. Drink now with bigger meals or can be aged for up to 10 years.



Sampling the Cabernet Shiraz to check its progress

2017 SENCILLO

**Sonoma County • 55% Viognier, 45% Chardonnay • pH: 3.37 • Alc: 13.4% • 100 cases • Screwcap
Bottled lightly fined and filtered, March 16th, 2018 • Release Price:\$18**

We planted Viognier in 2014 with the intention of making a late harvest dessert wine to enjoy with fresh fruit in summer. Until the vines are mature enough to take the stress of leaving grapes to get high sugar, I pick them earlier to make a white wine and last Spring we released a Viognier-Chardonnay blend called Sencillo as our Summer white. It returns this year, very similar in style to the 2016 version, again made simply (Sencillo means simple) with no added yeast, no malo-lactic fermentation, no new oak and bottled early to keep freshness and fruit. It has the floral notes of viognier balanced by the richness of Chardonnay. The perfect summer wine to have with salads, chicken and stir-fry shrimp. Drink now and in the next 12 months.

2017 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH

**Sonoma Valley • 100% Estate Syrah • pH: 3.34 • Alc: 13.5% • 180 cases • Screwcap
Bottled lightly fined and filtered, March 16th, 2018 • Release Price:\$18**

While rosés now seem all the rage, this wine is my 17th version! While it might be tempting to expand production, I have continued to farm and make the rose with the same commitment for quality as always. It comes from the same vineyard blocks around the winery as last year's, picked while the fruit is cold and whole cluster pressed as I do for my Chardonnay. The juice is fermented to zero sugar in barrel then aged there for another 5 months before bottling. It is again a fresh and delicate rose with wonderful fruit on the middle palate and a long finish. It is a fantastic wine to have during the Summer and Fall as it works with a very wide variety of foods and occasions. Drink now and in the next 12 months.

SONOMA REDS - LOT 11

**Sonoma County • 43% Syrah, 40% Zinfandel, 14% Cabernet, 3% Other • pH: 3.754 • Alc: 14.2%
166 cases • Screwcap • Bottled unfined and lightly filtered, August 28, 2017 • Release Price:\$17**

As most will know, the Sonoma Red is a multi-variety and multi-vintage red wine assembled from various lots made here in the winery. It is everything I want in an everyday wine, soft and generous and with good fruit and persistence and a little lower in acid to make it equally enjoyable without food as with. The zinfandel dominates the aroma with lots of raspberry, the Syrah shows with the middle palate richness and the Cabernet comes in on the finish. I think it is the most successful of the Sonoma Reds so far and this is a testament to the very high quality '15 and '16 vintages. Should keep for 2-3 years if you can resist and is a wine to buy by the case!

2011 SYRAH, ROSSI RANCH, LIBRARY RELEASE

**Sonoma Valley • 100% Syrah • pH: 3.67 • Alc: 13.7% • 65 cases available • Screwcap
Bottled unfined and lightly filtered, August 31, 2015 • Re-release Price:\$35**

Every year I hold back one wine that I think will benefit with additional bottle age and cellar it in the warehouse under ideal conditions with the intention of later release. This Spring's so called "library" release is the 2011 Syrah from Rossi ranch. 2011 was a cooler year and at release the wine reminded me of a cocoa covered raspberry, bright red fruit and crying out for a steak. Time has mellowed it and my most recent notes comment on sweet middle palate, softer, red fruit and the leather that is a hallmark of older Syrah. Tasted without knowing what it was, I thought it an older Australian (a bit like me, I suppose), and I liked it! For a special dinner and it should hold for another 3-4 years.

Spring Release Party
April 8th, 2-5 pm

The flowers are in bloom, the vines are awake, and the wines are flowing! Join us at the winery take in the beauty of springtime in Sonoma while enjoying the new Spring releases. Catch up with Chris and get the inside scoop on how the 2017 vintage is coming along. We will be bringing in one of Sonoma's best food trucks to enjoy with the wine along with what we think is one of the best views in Sonoma Valley!



Daffodils blooming in front of the winery showing the first signs that spring is here!

Please RSVP to winery@loxtonwines.com or 707-935-7221 by April 1st
 Members: No Charge, Guests: \$10

SHIPPING RATES							
Ground (5-7 Business Days)							2 DAY AIR
# of Bottles	CA,NV	AZ, ID NM, OR WA	CO, MT, WY	KS, ND NE, OK, SD	AR, IA, IL LA MN, MO, TX	AL, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IN KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MS NC, NJ, NH, NY, OH, PA, RI SC, TN, VA, VT, WI, WV	AK, HI
6	21	23	33	36	40	43	77
7	23	25	37	42	46	51	84
8	25	27	39	43	48	53	91
9	26	29	40	45	50	55	102
12*	29	33	35	40	45	50	120
18	38	45	60	70	80	85	200
2+ cases	25 each	27 each	35 each	40 each	45 each	50 each	115 each
<p align="center">*Special pricing now applied to purchases of 12+ bottles Additional charge will apply if address is incorrect or package is undeliverable resulting in redirection or return</p>							

WINE CLUB ORDER FOR:				
PLEASE MAKE ANY CUSTOMIZATIONS OR UPDATES TO YOUR INFO ONLINE, VIA E-MAIL, MAIL OR PHONE BY 3/20 UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO ACCEPT FAXES				
STANDARD ORDERS WILL BE BILLED 3/26 AND SHIPPED 4/2, PICKUPS AVAILABLE STARTING 4/8 CUSTOM ORDERS WILL BE BILLED AND SHIPPED SHORTLY AFTER THEY ARE RECEIVED				
Standard 6 <input type="checkbox"/>			Custom <input type="checkbox"/>	
QTY	PRICE	THE WINES	QTY	TOTAL
1	\$35	2015 PINOT NOIR, GRIFFIN'S LAIR		
1	\$30	2015 GSP, ESTATE		
1	\$30	2014 ZINFANDEL, ROSSI RANCH		
1	\$25	2015 SYRAH, SONOMA VALLEY		
1	\$35	2014 SYRAH - ESTATE		
1	\$35	2014 CABERNET SHIRAZ, GRANDFATHER'S CUVÉE		
OPTIONS FOR CUSTOM ORDERS				
0	\$18	2017 SENCILLO		
0	\$18	2017 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH		
0	\$17	SONOMA REDS - LOT 11 *25% CASE DISCOUNT		
0	\$35	2011 SYRAH, ROSSI RANCH, LIBRARY RELEASE		
0	\$30	2014 PORT 500ML		
6	\$190	SUBTOTAL	#	
	-\$38.00	LESS 20% WINE CLUB DISCOUNT *SONOMA REDS CASE DISCOUNT IN PLACE OF OTHER DISCOUNTS	-20%	
	\$152.00	PRE-TAX TOTAL		
CA	Out-of-state	8.125% SALES TAX		
\$12.35	\$0	(PICK-UPS, CA SHIPMENTS ONLY, 8% SALES TAX NH)		
\$164.35	\$152.00	WINE TOTAL WITH TAX (IF APPLICABLE)		
		SHIPPING CHARGES (SEE TABLE)		
		TOTAL		
MAILING ADDRESS		SHIPPING ADDRESS		
CREDIT CARD INFORMATION				
NEW VISA/MC				
SIGNATURE:				

P.O. Box 70, 11466 DUNBAR ROAD, GLEN ELLEN, CA 95442, PHONE (707)935-7221